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THE CILICIAN MASSACRES,
APRIL 1909

Raymond H. Kévorkian

In April 1909, an estimated 25,000 Armenians were massacred in Cilicia in conditions of extreme cruelty. International public opinion, all too familiar with such practices during the days of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, was convinced that the Young Turk revolution in July 1908 had put an end to such affairs and that “Young Turkey” was henceforth committed to modernization. It was all the more difficult to interpret the events since they occurred at the same time that reactionary forces in Constantinople tried to stage a coup to restore Abdul Hamid to power. Most observers saw in such violent acts a reminiscence of the methods used by the discredited sultan and could not imagine a constitutional regime organizing similar horrors. Armenians and non-Armenians wondered if the massacres signified the last gasps of the old regime or the first demonstration of the real intentions of the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP; *Ittihad ve Terakki*). Immediately prior to these events, the CUP leadership was surrounded by rumors, advanced by the popular liberal opposition, of arranging the murder of journalists and political opponents. It may be suggested that the CUP took advantage of the chaotic situation to mobilize thousands of soldiers to control the opposition and depose Sultan Abdul Hamid whose continued influence was a threat to them.

Once Grand Vizier Ahmed Tevfik Pasha was in control of the situation and the armed forces returned to the barracks in Constantinople, the Ottoman Parliament decided on April 17, 1909, to send a delegation (several Turks such as Yusuf Kemal and the Armenian deputies Krikor Zohrab and Vartkes Serengulian), to Mahmud Shevket Pasha, commander of the troops of Rumelia, to inform him that it was not necessary to march on the capital

and that such a move would provoke bloodshed.¹ Having initially accepted the advice, Mahmud Shevket nonetheless decided to occupy Constantinople.² After the fall of Tevfik's short-lived cabinet (April 18-26, 1909), the declared state of emergency and courts-martial led to the hanging of mutineers and political opponents, among whom were several journalists and liberal politicians labeled as anti-constitutional reactionaries.

How did Armenians react to these events? The daily press revealed a certain anxiety. In an article titled "The Crisis of the Day,"³ Puzant Ketchian, editor-in-chief of the Armenian daily *Puzantion*, reported that on the evening of April 16 the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF; Dashnaktsutun) took the initiative to organize a meeting at the Splendid Hotel which brought together thirty leaders of various political currents, including the CUP, Ahrar, ARF, and Armenian Social Democrat Hinchakian Party, so as to reconcile their differences and to defend the constitution. It was also reported that Armenian volunteers at Rodosto (Tekirdagh) had rallied to the armed forces of Rumelia in defense of the constitution. On April 27, the Armenian community of Constantinople organized national funerals for those killed during the fighting.⁴ Clearly, the Armenians supported the newly-restored constitution.

The Political Situation in Cilicia

Regarding the situation in Cilicia just before the massacres, a government commission of inquiry composed of two magistrates, one Turk, Faik Bey, a member of the presidency of the council of state, and the other, an Armenian, Harutiun Mosditchian, judicial inspector of the Salonika province—issued the first official report on July 10, 1909.⁵ It noted that at the beginning

¹ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 38-39, does not mention this important point. See also François Georgeon, "Le dernier sursaut (1878-1908)," in *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Paris: éd. Fayard, 1989); *Puzantion* (Constantinople), April 19, 1909, p. 3.

² *Puzantion*, April 19, 1909, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, April 17, 1909, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, April 27, 1909, p. 3.

⁵ Hagop Terzian, *Kilikio aghete* [The Catastrophe of Cilicia] (Constantinople:

of February 1909, Kur Ahmed, the son of the mufti of Hajin, telegraphed the prefect warning that the Armenians there were preparing to revolt.⁶ There were rumors that the Armenians would then march on Adana, agitating and angering the local Muslim population. In early March, another provocation took place at the Great Mosque (Ulu Jami), the door of which was reportedly soiled with excrement. The Christians were accused of sacrilege. The rumors proved to be untrue, and the authorities took note of the case. A short while later, new rumors spread in the Turkish quarters that Armenians were ready to attack the arms depot, and Turks were called upon to prepare for defense.

The accusation of Armenian separatism was the most serious charge. Major Doughty-Wylie, the British consul in Adana, wrote concerning this subject:

I do not believe in the existence of an Armenian revolution aiming to create an independent kingdom benefitting by foreign intervention. If Armenians have continued a similar purpose, they would have been pulled to the mountains, where they would have been able to defend themselves in a better way. They would have never left thousands of harvesters . . . sparse, without arms, in the countryside. Moreover, it is ridiculous to suppose that even armed Armenians, that had only revolvers and hunting guns, could think themselves capable to face the Ottoman army. As for a foreign intervention, the little knowledge of policy was enough to convince them of the absurdity of such an idea.⁷

All sources confirm, however, that the events of April 1909 were triggered by the murder of two Turkish ruffians by a young Armenian carpenter in the vicinity of Adana on Monday of Easter week, April 9.⁸ Shortly thereafter, the Young Turks of Adana organized a meeting presided over by Ihsan Fikri, who harangued against the Armenians. On the night of April 12, some people led by a certain Karakeuseh-oghlu Mahmud fired shots into the

H. Asaturian ev Vordi, 1912), pp. 689-99. See also *Azatamart*, July 31 and Aug. 2, 1909.

⁶ Duckett Z. Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana, in Asia Minor, during April, 1909* (London: n.p., 1913), p. 19.

⁷ A. Adossidès, *Arméniens et Jeunes-Turcs: Les massacres de Cilicie* (Paris: Stock, 1910), pp. 117-18; Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 10-19.

⁸ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 19-20.

air and made their way into the police station, claiming that Armenians had killed two Turks. Their claim proved false, but the next day, on April 13, a rumor spread that Armenians had killed four Muslims, two men and two women, although it was learned after an inquiry that this information, too, was untrue. At about 9:00 o'clock in the evening, a crowd demanded authorization from the *vali* (governor) to punish the Armenians. During the night, a large meeting in front of the prefecture building was presided over by the *vali* Jevad Bey, with the participation of the military governor Mustafa Remzi Pasha, the judge, and the mufti, and two notables, Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade and Gergerli Zade Ali. After a lively debate, the assembly resolved that it was high time to teach the Armenians a lesson. The mufti reportedly confirmed that the massacre of Christians was in accordance with Islamic law and delivered a *fetva* (legal opinion) confirming the sentence.⁹

The First Massacres
(April 14-16, 1909)

The violence that consumed Cilicia after April 14 was not a spontaneous movement. Rather, it was a planned act, as indicated by the circulation of false rumors, the involvement of the rural population in the violence, the public incitement by Muslim clerics, and the organizational role of notables, police, and high officials. April 14 was devoted to the destruction of Armenian shops in the marketplace—the Muslim street stalls had been carefully sealed—and to the massacre of Armenians living isolated in the outskirts of Adana. In the country inns, about 300 persons were murdered, most of them seasonal workers from Hajin and Diarbekir.

According to witnesses, between 20,000 and 30,000 Turks, Kurds, and immigrants from Crete divided into five to ten groups. Flanked by local notables such as Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade and Salih Effendi Bochnak, they attacked the Armenian quarter of Shabanie. After initial panic, the Armenians raised bar-

⁹ Ibid., pp. 717-24, including report by Faik Bey and Hagop Mosditchian, July 7, 1909. See also *Azatamart*, July 17, 1909, p. 3; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 22-23.

ricades and resisted for three days until the morning of April 17.¹⁰ People who then left their hiding places discovered an apocalyptic landscape: innumerable corpses littering the streets and houses burned. More than 10,000 people were left without food and shelter. Large numbers of Armenians in the surrounding villages on the plain had been cut down in the fields.

Other Regions of Cilicia

The wave of violence in April 1909 was not confined to Adana alone but rather affected the whole of Cilicia, with variable results according to circumstances and the level of concentration of Armenians. The region was home to a great diversity of Muslim and Christian populations, with the Armenians numbering about 230,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹¹ They were concentrated mostly around Adana, Hajin, Zeitun, Marash, Aintab, Jebel Bereket, Musa Dag, and Kessab. Some 50,000 Greeks lived in Mersin (Mersine; Mersina) and Ichil, and several thousands Syrian Christians (Syriac) were settled in Mersin and Tarsus.¹²

The report issued by the government commission of inquiry on July 10, 1909, included a series of telegrams by *mutessarif* (county governor) Mohammed Assaf Bey to different authorities concerning the *sanjak* (county) of Jebel Bereket. These telegrams show that Assaf Bey had communicated patently false information to commanders of reservist troops and to officials at various levels of government in Constantinople, Adana, Hamidiye, Baghche, and Alexandretta. The report added that the communica-

¹⁰ This is derived from multiple sources such as the report by the parliamentary commission, missionaries, and foreign consuls. Some of this material appears in Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 26-36, 37; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 23-25; P. Rigal, "Adana: Les Massacres d'Adana," *Lettres d'Ore, relations d'Orient* [revue confidentielle des missions jésuites éditée par le siège de Lyon et publiée à Bruxelles], Nov. 1909, pp. 359-91; see also July 1909, pp. 199-223.

¹¹ Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1992), pp. 265-67.

¹² Stephan Astourian, "Testing World-System Theory, Cilicia (1830s-1890s): Armenian-Turkish Polarization and the Ideology of Modern Ottoman Historiography," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 99-100.

tions by Assaf Bey exhibited extraordinary malevolence. In fact, the telegrams that the mutessarif received from Osmaniye, Hamidiye, and surrounding villages had informed him that everywhere it was the Muslims—natives and non-natives of Adana—who committed crimes and disturbed the public order. Nevertheless, Assaf Bey in a telegram on April 3 reported to the interior ministry that the *fedayees* (revolutionaries) at Hasanbeyli and Zeitun had assembled to destroy the entire sanjak and were expected to move on Adana. On April 4, he requested authorization from the interior ministry and *vilayet* (province) to release 400 convicts imprisoned at Payas with a view of forming an armed battalion. He subsequently did just that and turned them against the Armenians.¹³

But the most serious act by Assaf Bey involved telegram No. 115, which he addressed on April 16, 1909 to the sub-prefect of Marash, the military commander of the region, and the vali of Aleppo, warning that the entire Adana vilayet was in danger.¹⁴ Armenians were thus portrayed as threatening the integrity of the vilayet, and the Muslim population began to agitate for revenge. In Dort-Yol, home to 4,850 residents in 1908, the Armenian population resisted thirteen days (that is, until April 27).¹⁵

The massacre in Tarsus took place on Friday, April 16. Four to five hundred persons fled to the American college, about a thousand to the Cappucin monastery, and others to the gardens of reliable peasant *fellas*. The main organizer of the massacres in Tarsus was a certain Shefket, local president of the Committee of Union and Progress. Six hundred Armenian houses were burned, 70 persons were murdered in the city and 560 others in the surrounding villages. In Mersin, as in Adana, the president of the local CUP, Osman Bey, played a decisive role. On April 16, a mob attacked Armenians in the streets and burned houses, while more than 1,200 people found refuge in foreign establishments at

¹³ These documents, which were reproduced in the press in Constantinople, were compiled by Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 138-47; Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 695ff., including extracts from the report of the parliamentary commission by Hagop Babigian (Hakob Papikian), published by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, *La situation des Arméniens en Turquie exposée par des documents, 1908-1912* (Constantinople: Armenian Patriarchate, 1913), vol. 3, pp. 5-27.

¹⁴ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 220-25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-65. See also *Azatamart*, July 14, 1909, p. 4.

the port. The massacres, which lasted for a day, claimed the lives of 96 Armenians. Similar bloodshed and destruction occurred in the towns of Elvanli and Lambron.¹⁶

The village of Abdoghlu, south of Adana, consisted in 1909 of 130 houses, 100 of which were Armenian. On Friday, April 16, horsemen surrounded the village and massacred the men. The village of Sheikh-Murad, also located south of Adana, had 45 houses (200 people), and 200 seasonal workers from Hajin staying in the nearby hamlet of Aghz Boyuk. On Thursday, April 15, the Turks of the neighboring villages attacked Aghz Boyuk and killed most of the men, while the Armenians in Sheikh-Murad resisted and were able to escape to Adana.

There were many victims in Giavur Koy and Kristian Koy, 5 miles (8 kilometers) to the north of Adana, in Injirlik, 5.5 miles (9 kilometers) to the east,¹⁷ in Kayerli, about 9 miles (14 kilometers) to the north, as well as in the plain of Adana, where between 15,000 and 20,000 Armenian seasonal laborers from other regions of Cilicia and farther north came to work. According to the various investigations, an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 of these people fell victim.¹⁸

Sis, Hajin, and Feke resisted until April 19, but a large number of Armenians were killed in the surrounding villages of Chaker Oghlu, Farelar, Geuljeyiz, and Fundijak-Keunesler.¹⁹ In Hamidiye, a total of 1,000 Armenian victims were counted, while hundreds escaped the slaughter thanks to the French family, the Sabatiers, who afforded shelter in their factory and home.²⁰ In Osmaniye, the massacres began on the evening of April 14 and claimed 588 lives.²¹ In Hasanbeyli, the massacres, which began on the evening of April 15, claimed 285 lives.²² In Baghche, on April 16,

¹⁶ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 52; Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 166-76; *Azatamart*, June 24, July 15-16, 1909.

¹⁷ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 42; *Azatamart*, June 25, 1909, p. 2.

¹⁸ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 47; *Azatamart*, June 24, 1909, p. 2, and July 7, 1909, p. 2.

¹⁹ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (AMAE), Correspondance politique, Turquie, vol. 83, folio 144/2, report, du gérant du vice-consulat de Marach au ministère Pichon, July 2, 1909.

²⁰ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 189-95; *Azatamart*, July 7, 1909, p. 2.

²¹ *Azatamart*, July 7, 1909, p. 2.

²² See Rigal, "Adana," pp. 160-61; *Azatamart*, June 25, 1909, p. 2.

102 houses out of 110 were burned and 113 men were killed. In Lapaji, the church, the school, shops, farms, and 145 houses were all torched; out of 747 residents, 581 survived. In Kharne, 2 churches, 2 schools, 131 houses, 41 shops, a bakery, and a mill were burned, but 619 out of 795 residents survived. In Kurdlar, 70 houses were burned, and 26 of the 101 residents were killed. In Geuk Chayir, 41 houses were burned, while 130 out of 185 residents survived.²³ In Kars-Bazar, to the north of Osmaniye, about 1,000 Armenians and 4,000 refugees were besieged for three weeks.²⁴

Erzin, Yarpuz, Kaipakli, Turunjili, and Ayas were burned and an unknown number of their inhabitants massacred.²⁵ The people of Najari, Ojaki, and Euzerli took refuge in Dort-Yol, but most of the residents of Yumurtalik and Payas, situated on the Gulf of Alexandretta, were annihilated on April 14-15. In the east of Erzin sanjak, damages were mainly material, as in Keller, Intilli, Kushju, Kunes, Kurd Baghchesi, Hasa, and the 22 farms surrounding Islahiye. Akbes was besieged by Kurdish tribes, but resisted seventeen days in the convents of French Lazarists and Trappists.²⁶

The Armenian population of Antioch was massacred on April 19, as were the seasonal workers on Turkish farms in the region of Kheder Bek. In Alexandretta, the Armenian population survived because they fled to the mission complex of Reverend George Kennedy and to the farm of a local notable until the arrival of British and French ships which provided them some protection.²⁷ Situated about 9 miles (14 kilometers) to the south of Alexandretta, Beylan was surrounded by the villages of Atik, Kanli Dere, Sari Chinar, Soghanji, Mezgituni and Haji Musali—whose inhabitants were mostly Armenian. On April 15-16, just before nearby Kurdish nomads attacked, these Armenians fled to Beylan.

²³ Rigal, "Adana," p. 160.

²⁴ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 244-50.

²⁵ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 56, 61-62; *Azatamart*, June 23, 1909, p. 3.

²⁶ Rigal, "Adana," pp. 61-62; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 66.

²⁷ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 73; *Puzantion*, May 4, 1909, p. 3; Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 255-56. See also Constant (P.), *Capucins missionnaires, Syrie, Liban, Turquie* (Marseilles: n.p., 1931), pp. 36-60.

In the region of Antioch, thousands of Armenians of the five villages of Suedia, situated on the foothills of Musa Dagħ on the Mediterranean coast, were saved from certain massacre by the arrival of a British warship.²⁸ The villages near Kessab were attacked on April 22, but the town itself was defended by 300 Armenian youth, as 6,000 people crossed over the mountain by night to the Bay of Bazit where French ships took them aboard.²⁹

In Marash, as in Zeitun, where the Armenian population was well organized, there were no major problems. Nonetheless, during the first days of the turmoil, there were massacres in the sanjak, as in Findijek (Fundujak), El-Oghlu, Sarilar, Geuljeyiz, and in isolated areas. Up to April 20, a total of 480 persons were killed. Farther to the north in the kaza of Goksun, a French diplomat recorded that in Anejak, out of 220 inhabitants, 11 died and 2 houses were burned; in Adjeuli, out of 121 inhabitants, 12 died and 2 houses were burned; in Kechifli, 12 died and 73 houses were burned.

*The Interlude of April 17-24 in Adana
and the First Official Reactions in Constantinople*

On April 18, the first French warship arrived in Turkish waters on its way to Mersin, followed by British, Russian, German, American, and Italian vessels.³⁰ Aware of the irritation their presence caused among the local population and the authorities, they prudently limited their intervention to the landing of observation missions, to courtesy calls to local officials, and to humanitarian assistance through religious institutions. In the city, the streets were cleared of corpses, which were thrown in the Sihun (Seyhan)

²⁸ Service Historique de la Marine (Vincennes), SS ED 100, Escadre de la Méditerranée, dépêche no. 9 (May 5, no. 638), Beyrouth (April 27, 1909), le Contre-Amiral Pivet, Commandant l'Escadre légère de la Méditerranée, au ministère de la Marine.

²⁹ Ibid.; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 74-75; Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 256-57.

³⁰ Service Historique de la Marine (Vincennes), SS ED 100, 13 pp., Escadre de la Méditerranée occidentale et du Levant, dépêche no. 716, Alexandrette, May 8, 1909, le Contre-Amiral Pivet, Commandant l'Escadre légère de la Méditerranée, au ministre de la Marine.

River. Sailors reported hundreds of corpses floating in the bay of Mersin.

The situation remained tense, as attested by the incendiary articles published in the special April 20 issue of *İttidal* (Moderate), the daily organ of the Young Turks in Adana.³¹ Distributed free of charge to the Muslim population, the special issue was an inventory of sorts, including attitudes toward the Armenians and the psychology and *modus operandi* of the local Turkish elite. Armenians were shocked by the articles of İhsan Fikri, the director of the newspaper and president of the Young Turks of Adana, and its editor-in-chief, İsmail Sefa, thought to be a democrat and a defender of the constitution who would demand punishment for the perpetrators. The Armenians were then unaware of İhsan Fikri's role in the organization of the first massacres. In fact, the April 20 issue sought to prove that the Armenians alone were responsible for the bloodshed and rejected accusations of mass murder committed by military and civil authorities. The paper aimed at reversing the roles and responsibilities. In an article titled "A Terrible Insurrection," İsmail Sefa now wrote:

How sad that the wave of anger and [desire] of independence which had taken root in Armenian hearts caused the ruin of the country. . . . Let us examine this insurrection that has condemned the inhabitants of Adana to absolute misery. Like Turks, Armenians were, during thirty-three years of tyranny, crushed under its [the old regime's] infernal pressure and raised their voice [against it]. When Ottomans entered in a period of happiness and tremendous peace, they [Armenians] for a brief moment ceased protesting and asking for revenge and have, like us, applauded our holy Revolution. But it did not last long, and they undertook preparations in view of their own project. Sometimes, they provoked tension by showing a discontented face and by making public that it was impossible for them to live with Muslims. . . . Our call for unity and agreement was not enough to reduce their harmful ways and this caused a difference of understanding between Turks and them. . . . Armenians worked almost non-stop to obtain what they lacked and displayed a great activity

³¹ Published in facsimile, with a translation of the incriminating articles, in Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 64-92.

in order to be equipped with arms. On the market and in public, Armenians went so far as to outbid others to purchase Martinis, Mausers, and other arms of war. After having stocked arms of war, their rhetoric exceeded their traditional boundaries. . . . They shamelessly launched threats of this kind: one day or another, we will massacre Turks; henceforth we are not afraid. The old wounds bled again, and so they provoked Turks to clear their names. Turks, however, by accepting advice of appeasement from their leaders, wished to avoid any incident. While observing this unbearable silence and the patience that Muslims showed, Armenians have planned, by transgressing laws, to engage in various crimes. . . . The fact that the state was not strong enough caused fear and anxiety among Turks, while on the contrary it gave further strength and courage to the Armenians.³²

Ismail Sefa raised a key point which informed observers have emphasized—namely, that all behavior seeking equality or justice for all was interpreted as insurrection.

Edouard Barfoglio, special correspondent of *Le Temps*, considered it wrong to see in the Adana events the involvement of the Yildiz palace (Abdul Hamid). He wrote in June 1909:

Turks, who have always dominated, feel being the losers in the new established order. In a way, the Constitution deprived them of their earlier preponderance and they believe that, under these conditions, the future can bring only destruction; in this context, they try to preserve their privileges by the shedding of blood and looting. Turks took notice of the changing behavior of the Armenians in their daily relationships.³³

The underlying causes for the massacres in Adana and the comments by the *Ittihad* become more comprehensible when considered in this light.

In the same issue of the *Ittihad* appeared an article titled "Signs of Anarchy" by Ihsan Fikri. It warned of a conspiracy against the constitutional state and the progressive colonization of Cilicia by Armenians and made intimidating threats. Two days earlier, on April 18, Adil Bey, of the interior ministry, reported

³² Ibid., pp. 64-68.

³³ Article reprinted in *Azatamart*, June 26, 1909, p. 2.

about the Adana affair:

Armenians are the ones who have attacked; they are armed and massacre defenseless Turks; they have surrounded the building of the prefecture. Armenians come from far villages and attack Turkish localities; they are armed, while Turks have only rods. . . . Armed Armenians went so far as to besiege the sub-prefecture of the sanjak of Jebel-Bereket, whose terrified mutessarif constantly asked for help.³⁴

On April 17, 1909, a parliamentary delegation visited General Mahmud Shevket Pasha in Chatalja, and it is likely that during this meeting, which included two Armenian deputies, a decision was made to send 850 men of the Second and Third regiments to Cilicia. There, on the afternoon of Sunday, April 25, soldiers were fired on while pitching their tents on the Kishla Meydan esplanade, located on the Sihun River. No injuries were reported, but the incident caused excitement among the troops, particularly when some agitators arrived at the camp claiming that Armenians had attacked the Turkish quarters and that the soldiers were urgently needed to assist their co-religionists. The situation was ripe for a second round of massacres.

The Second Massacres of Adana (April 25-27, 1909)

On April 25, at 6 o'clock in the evening, shooting started again for no apparent reason. This time, however, Christians did not defend themselves. The city was in a state of siege, and a curfew banned people from going outdoors after sunset.³⁵ The report of Hagop Babigian, the Armenian member of the inquiry commission sent to Adana by the Ottoman Parliament, gives the following description:

It is impossible to find words strong enough to convey the horror and the ferocity of this second massacre that lasted for two days. It is during this butchery that the invalids and the injured coming from the surrounding farms and villages or found in the school

³⁴ See *Puzantion*, April 19, 1909, p. 2.

³⁵ Rigal, "Adana," p. 149.

building were burned alive. Jevad Bey judged it was superfluous to speak, in his report, of the terrible death that these miserable people met in the flames; it does not say any word about the pregnant women that were ripped open, the slaughtered children and other thousands of atrocities. But he has taken care to note that a great quantity of bombs and dynamite had exploded during the fire in the Armenian quarter. The best denial of this calumny is found in the very fact that the Armenians have never, during their defense, used bombs or dynamite. It is clear that if the Armenians actually possessed such firepower, rather than rely on ordinary arms to defend themselves, they would use them, and their effects would have very easily been recognized. As we did not find the least indication suggesting the use of such explosives, it is natural to deduce that this concerns a simple calumny aiming to place on the Armenian people the responsibility of the events.³⁶

Based on the evidence, the report concluded that government officials in Adana were trying to minimize their own responsibility in the massacres that they had fomented by placing the blame on the Armenians.

Human and Material Losses

Estimates of the human losses in Cilicia has caused endless debates regarding the figures, which have ranged from 1,000 to more than 20,000. The first data published by local authorities—that is, under the supervision of the vali Jevad Bey—recorded a total of 1,000 dead, of whom 250 were Muslims. The successor of Jevad, Mustafa Zihni Baban Zade, estimated in a telegram to the Ministry of Interior that 1,924 Muslims were killed and 553 injured, and 1,455 Armenians were killed and 383 injured.³⁷ On the other hand, during the parliamentary session of May 2, the Armenian deputies placed the number of Armenian victims at between 20,000 and 30,000.³⁸ General Mahmud Shevket Pasha, in

³⁶ See the report by Babigian, *La situation des Arménien en Turquie*, p. 17. This is confirmed by Major Doughty-Wylie, "Report on the Massacres in Adana," in Great Britain, Foreign Office Archives, 424/220.

³⁷ See Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 300, 607; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 80.

³⁸ Speech by Krikor Zohrab, mentioning as a source a letter received at Constantinople from the dragoman of the French vice consulate at Mersin and Adana.

an interview published in the newspaper *La Tribune* on May 13, rejected these figures and noted that according to the official data the number of victims was not more than 3,000, including both Armenians and Muslims.³⁹

The testimonials appearing in the independent press in Constantinople and Europe provided a totally different picture. In order to remain credible, therefore, some Turkish officials accepted the actual figures and distanced themselves from the conclusions of the authorities in Cilicia. Parliamentary commission member Hagop Babigian, noted: "I have observed a huge difference between official figures and the general evaluation of the number of victims. Armenians and foreign newspaper correspondents agree to a figure varying between 25,000 and 30,000. As for the government, after first placing the official figures at 1,500 non-Muslims and 1,900 Muslims, it admits currently, as a result of new inquiries, to a total figure of 6,000."

Figures of the government were based on the office registries and lists given by the *mukhtars* (village headmen) and priests of some localities. Office registries, however, were not reliable. It is also clear that authorities in Adana concealed the actual figures of Christian victims.⁴⁰ The government's inquiry commission, which consisted of two high magistrates—Faik Bey and Mosditchian Effendi—and the governor of Mersin, Essad Rauf Bey, reported to the Minister of Interior on July 10, 1909:

The total figure of persons killed during the painful events of the vilayet of Adana is, according to the office registries, 5,683—including policemen and soldiers—1,487 of whom were Muslims and 4,196 non-Muslims. However, it is possible that a great number of people who were in this area temporarily and were not recorded also have died; and as it is currently possible to establish the number of these persons, we believe that the total figure of those killed—Muslims and non-Muslims—must be approximately 15,000.⁴¹

See Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 604-05.

³⁹ Reprinted in *Puzantion*, May 14, 1909, p. 2.

⁴⁰ See Armenian Patriarchate, *Les situation des Arméniens en Turquie*, p. 18.

⁴¹ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 717-24, including report by Faik Bey and Hagop Mosditchian, July 7, 1909. See also *Azatamart*, July 17, 1909, p. 3; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 22-23.

Despite their official character, these figures were not publicly recognized by the government. In early August, it again placed the number of victims at 6,429 in the vilayet of Adana and 454 in Aleppo.⁴² Following the publication of the report by the two magistrates, the new vali Mustafa Zihni Pasha Baban Zade ordered more extensive inquiries, which placed the number at 20,200 for the vilayet of Adana: 19,400 Christians (of whom 418 were Syrian Jacobites, 163 Chaldeans, 99 Greeks, 210 Armenian Catholics, 655 Armenian Protestants) and 620 Muslims.⁴³ Moreover, thousands died during the next several months as a result of injuries and epidemics—for example, about 2,000 children died of dysentery in the summer of 1909.⁴⁴ The figure of about 25,000 victims thus comes nearest to the truth.

Material Losses

As with the human losses, the extent of material losses, too, led to debates. The first statements provided by the government indicated that Muslims and Armenians had equally suffered considerable material losses. The government of Grand Vizier Hussein Hilmi Pasha had just instructed Zihni Pasha to prepare a statement on the damages caused by the disorder. For the city of Adana, he arrived at the figure of 96,000 Turkish pounds, rounded up to 100,000 in the official organ, *Tasviri Efkiar* (Representative Opinion). For the vilayet of Adana, it recorded a total of 4,823 houses, farms, schools, churches, factories, caravanserais (inns), mills, and shops destroyed, of which 386 belonged to Muslims.⁴⁵ According to the information collected on each of the localities, this figure, though probably far from the truth, nevertheless reveals the magnitude of the economic catastrophe caused by the massacres, looting, and fires.

⁴² *Tasviri Efkiar*, Aug. 12, 1909.

⁴³ Numbers confirmed by Chargé d'affaires Boppe, in a letter addressed to Foreign Minister Pichon, AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 83, folio 147.

⁴⁴ Ferriman, *Young Turks*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Cf. Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 717-24, including the report of Faik Bey and Hagop Mosditchian, July 7, 1909. See also *Azatamart*, July 17, 1909, p. 3; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 22-23, 85-87.

Social Consequences: The Homeless and Orphans

The massacres had targeted mostly adult men between the ages of sixteen and forty-five. As a result, the catastrophe left behind a large number of widows and orphans. Their care and safety became a national priority for the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and its representatives.⁴⁶ Indeed, some weeks after the events, the patriarchate took the initiative to organize an international commission to assist the survivors. The commission held its first meeting on May 22, 1909, in Constantinople. It allocated large sums to secure the livelihood of approximately 90,000 homeless people.⁴⁷ A greater problem, however, was posed by the lack of farm equipment, because so much of it had been destroyed during the carnage.

Subsequently, missions were dispatched to evaluate the conditions in the affected areas, and they were followed by volunteer doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. These missions ensured the distribution of foodstuff and financial assistance totaling about 1,943,162 Turkish *kurush*.⁴⁸ Considering the extensive work and finances required to organize and administer the orphanages, it was decided on August 20, 1909, to establish a central commission in charge of six orphanages in Cilicia sheltering a total of 1,426 children as follows:

Orphanages Established in Cilicia (August-October 1909)

Location	Month	Number of Orphans
Adana	August	233
Marash	September	178
Hajin	September	350

⁴⁶ See the correspondence and notes by Zabel Yesayan (Zapel Esayan), administrator of the Armenian Red Cross in Cilicia at the time, published in *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine* 3 (1999): 229-48.

⁴⁷ Numbers given by the governmental investigative commission; cf. Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 717-24, including the report of Faik Bey and Hagop Mosditchian, July 7, 1909. See also *Azatamart*, July 17, 1909, p. 3; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 91-93.

⁴⁸ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 814-16.

Aintab	October	185
Hasanbeyli	October	207
Dort-Yol	October	273

The Political Management of the Massacres

The data pertaining to human and material losses as a result of the massacres of Cilicia correlated with those announced by international observers and Armenian agencies. The Ottoman government attempted to minimize human losses and to portray the events as uncontrollable riots with an equal number of victims among Armenians and Muslims. Its official declarations were intended to make the public believe that the Armenians primarily were responsible for the turmoil. There were, however, a small number of Ottoman government officials who demanded that the Cilician affair receive further attention. These included ten Armenian deputies of the Ottoman Parliament and some Turkish and Greek deputies who demonstrated their courage in the openly hostile environment.

Clearly, there was sufficient evidence to implicate the local civil and military authorities in the massacres. But there was also evidence implicating the central government and the Committee of Union and Progress. The Armenian deputies expressed their indignation at the new violence and demanded clarifications regarding the charge that the Armenians had caused their own massacres. The local Armenians were accused of provoking the turmoil as part of a larger conspiracy to revive the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. Experienced observers would agree, however, that the sudden outburst of violence in Cilicia beginning on April 14, 1909, could not have taken place without an actual or anticipated order from the highest authorities in the capital. The violence was in full keeping with the Hamidian pogroms.

Young Turk politicians also attributed part of the blame for the massacres to counter-revolutionary forces linked with Sultan Abdul Hamid. This explanation appears improbable as it contradicts the fact that the Young Turks had isolated the sultan in the Yildiz palace and dispersed a good part of his collaborators and his Albanian guard, virtually disabling him from influencing events. Still, even P. Rigal, a pragmatic Jesuit, concluded: "The author responsible for these massacres is the same that thirteen

years ago had immolated a hundred thousand victims and who today, realizing that his throne will collapse, wanted with his own falling also to remove from the earth this too vivacious people whose name he considered so odious."⁴⁹

First Reactions of Central Authorities

Considering the short duration of Grand Vizier Tevfik Pasha's tenure in April 1909, he could not have consolidated power in his own hands so quickly to instigate the bloodshed in Cilicia. Rather, it was General Mahmud Shevket Pasha who decided to send the troops to Cilicia, and it was Deputy Ministry of the Interior Adil Bey, a member the Young Turk Central Committee, who gave an account of the events both to Tevfik Pasha and to Parliament.

The Parliament placed the issue on its agenda on May 2, 1909. Presiding over the chamber, Young Turk leader Ahmed Riza could do nothing else but to read the report sent to him on April 26 by Jevad Bey, the former vali of Adana. Using language no more moderate than in his previous reports, Jevad conveyed the following to the deputies: "We learned from reliable sources that the responsibility of the latest events rests on some Armenian fedayees."⁵⁰ The Armenian deputies, supported by several Greek and Turkish colleagues, immediately challenged the claim. They emphasized that the vali's report consisted of falsification, and they attacked Adil Bey, who in a telegram had instructed Jevad Bey to restore peace, which under the old regime meant "to massacre the Armenians."⁵¹

The chamber then requested that Minister of Interior Rauf Bey provide explanations. Appointed only few days earlier and unfamiliar with the issues, Rauf gave the floor to Adil Bey to speak on behalf of the ministry. After a careful statement, in which he attempted to justify his actions during the Cilician affair, Adil Bey informed the assembly that Grand Vizier Hilmi

⁴⁹ See Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 26-36, 37; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 23-25; Rigal, "Adana," pp. 359-91; see also July 1909, pp. 199-223.

⁵⁰ He alludes to the second massacres in progress as he was writing.

⁵¹ See Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 26-36, 37; Ferriman, *Young Turks*, pp. 23-25; Rigal, "Adana," Nov. 1909, pp. 359-91; see also July 1909, pp. 199-223.

Pasha and Mahmud Shevket had decided to send a special commission to investigate the massacres.

In response, the leader of the Armenian deputies, Krikor Zohrab, made the following statement:

There are two ways of learning the truth, either by words or by concrete elements and testimonies. The counselor [Adil Bey] read to us the telegrams of the prefect of Adana and the governor of Jebel-Bereket as if they were reliable documents. He was asked how many people approximately had been massacred, and this powerful counselor, who is in communication with this region ten times a day, was not able to give us the information.⁵²

The correspondent of *Le Temps* reported: "During yesterday's meeting, a lively discussion began about the massacres of Adana. Several deputies, especially Armenians, attacked the government and demanded the ex-*vali*'s trial. The Deputy Minister of Interior defended the government; he read the telegrams of the authorities attributing the turmoil to Armenian revolutionaries and representing Armenians everywhere as assailants."⁵³

Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha's government clearly supported the thesis developed by the officials in Cilicia. This position, however, underwent a perceptible evolution, undoubtedly influenced by information published in the international press and by discussions with foreign officials. During the parliamentary session of May 13, Hilmi insisted that the deputies agree to dispatch a commission of inquiry to Cilicia under the authority of the Minister of Interior. The commission would consist of two Armenians and two Muslims, two being state officials and two being deputies. The ensuing debate revealed that certain groups in the Parliament were opposed to such a commission, but the meeting eventually elected Hagop Babigian and Shefik Bey, both staunch Young Turks. During the parliamentary session of May 23, Shefik Bey announced his inability to accept the offer, and the Parliament finally elected Yusuf Kemal, Young Turk deputy from Kastamuni. During the same session, President of Parlia-

⁵² This was an allusion to the fact that he was, in fact, in charge of the Ministry of the Interior.

⁵³ "La crise turque: Les Arméniens se plaignent à la Chambre," *Le Temps*, May 3, 1909, p. 1.

ment Ahmed Riza expressed concern that the Adana affair had caused difficulties with the European powers, requiring the commerce minister to hold daily interviews with the foreign ambassadors.⁵⁴

The European governments were anxious to maintain their prominence in the East. The creation of the parliamentary commission of inquiry was more in response to European pressures than a desire to help the Armenian victims. It was in this context that on May 24, 1909, Hilmi Pasha finally discussed the Cilician crisis before Parliament. Without referring to sensitive issues, he presented a list of measures taken such as the declaration of the state of emergency in Cilicia and the establishment of courts-martial in Adana, Marash, and Aintab. He announced also that the military had restored order and that goods stolen during the events were being returned to their owners. Finally, he added that in order to determine the number of the victims and the responsibility of the local authorities, he had set up a commission of inquiry composed of two deputies and two magistrates, whose findings would help in identifying and punishing the culprits.⁵⁵

The government and Parliament preferred not to issue official statements, hiding instead behind the prospective reports to be submitted by the commission of inquiry, which, they expected, would present appeasing conclusions. By appointing two Young Turk deputies, the former magistrate Hagop Babigian and the attorney Yusuf Kemal, as well as two magistrates, Harutium Mosditchian and Faik Bey, Hilmi Pasha hoped that the commission would deliver favorable conclusions clearing the state and the Turkish political elite of any charges regarding the massacres and thereby exonerating them before world public opinion. Whether Hilmi gave instructions to that effect to any member of the commission cannot be ascertained, but his and Young Turks' power and influence become visible through a close examination of the fieldwork of the commissioners and the conclusions presented in the two known reports: one submitted by the two magistrates

⁵⁴ A translation of the minutes of the meeting of the Parliament was published in the press in Constantinople. See *Puzantion*, May 24 and 25, 1909, pp. 2-3 in each issue.

⁵⁵ Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 611-15.

on July 10, and the other by Hagop Babigian but kept secret until 1912.

The members of the commission arrived in Cilicia in early June and conducted their investigations for more than a month. Faik and Mosditchian prepared a report; however, the two deputies, Hagop Babigian and Yusuf Kemal, though members of the same party, disagreed, as indicated in a telegram by the French vice consul at Mersin and Adana, Barre de Lancy.⁵⁶ Leaving Mersin on July 4 with Faik and Mosditchian,⁵⁷ Babigian confirmed in interviews with two Young Turk newspapers during his stop in Smyrna that there was some misunderstanding between him and Yusuf Kemal. When asked about the results of his inquiry and the reasons behind the massacres, he replied: "Given the elements collected during my inquiry, [we can tell] that since the proclamation of the constitution partisans of tyranny signaled their displeasure and planned to massacre Christians; this is evident and proven by official judicial documents."

To another question on the participation by local or central authorities in the massacres, he replied: "The central power did not participate in it but was the cause. As for local authorities, they were implicated." The vali Jevad Bey, the military commander Mustafa Remzi Pasha, the mutessarif of Jebel Bereket Mohammed Assaf Bey, Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade, Salih Efendi Bochnak, and Ihsan Fikri, the proprietor of the newspaper *Ittidal*, all were involved. In the same interview, Babigian also alluded to the lack of objectivity in the court-martial proceedings and testimonies.⁵⁸

In a statement to the correspondent of *Tasviri Efkiar*, Babigian stressed that the details published in the European press concerning the events of Adana were not exaggerated and in fact, based on his own observations, even fell short of the truth. He maintained that the trouble had two main causes: reactionary sentiments and tyranny. The mufti of Baghche, he stated, had begun to circulate rumors asserting that the concepts of freedom and constitution were Christian inventions that were opposed to

⁵⁶ AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 83, folio 159/2, July 3, 1909, Barre de Lancy to Boppe.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Reprinted in *Azatamart*, July 7, 1909, p. 3.

the *sharia* (Muslim law and way of life). The mufti thus exhorted the Muslims to rise against the Christians and the constitution. Babigian underscored that there was no proof implicating Sultan Abdul Hamid in the massacres. These circumstances, he said, gave rise to three questions that framed the public accusations made by local Cilician authorities: 1) that the Armenians were the cause of the disorder; 2) that Armenians demanded independence in Cilicia; and 3) that the primate of Adana, Bishop Mushegh, was implicated in this affair.

Babigian emphasized that all three points were erroneous. Available official documents proved that the Armenians were not the cause of the violence. The inquiry revealed that Armenians did not demand independence and that the primate had not misbehaved. On the contrary, Babigian added, since January 1909, Bishop Mushegh had submitted memoranda to the prefecture in which the Armenian prelate repeatedly communicated his fears of impending violence and urged that the authorities take all necessary measures to prevent such an eventuality. The vali, however, considered the prelate's concerns to be farfetched.⁵⁹

Concerning the number of victims, Babigian alluded to data gathered by the new vali Zihni and made public later, which showed just over 20,000 dead, of whom only 620 were Muslim. Finally, the last question pertained to an injury received by the English consul at Adana. The local authorities presented the case as an example of Armenian criminal behavior, but Babigian took issue with this interpretation: "I have personally questioned the consul on this point and he stated the following: The turmoil began, and terror reigned everywhere. I went out to the street; I saw someone who, by his appearance, behavior, and gestures seemed completely mad and ran toward me. He then began to flee. I wanted to approach him to ask him what happened. He interpreted my movement as harboring a bad intention and fired his revolver at me and fled."⁶⁰ In a separate interview, Faik Bey maintained that these events were not the work of reactionary circles but rather the result of the ignorance of local Muslims and Christians.⁶¹ This and similar interviews reflected the tone of

⁵⁹ Reprinted in *Azatamart*, July 9, 1909, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Reprinted in *Azatamart*, July 13, 1909, p. 3.

the reports in the Young Turk press, which had published information reiterating the thesis developed by Jevad Bey and Adil Bey.

Undeniably, the conclusions of the two reports of inquiry left little doubt regarding the minimal responsibility of the Armenians, overwhelmingly the victims. For the Turkish government, however, there was a chasm between general statements sparing the political groups by attributing the violence to an ignorant mob and to the incompetence of local officials, on the one hand, and the hard-hitting statements by Hagop Babigian, on the other. The latter seemed to have transgressed a tacit rule that prohibited any public disclosure of the fact that local Muslims had received orders to massacre Armenians, that soldiers of the Macedonian army in the area were directly involved in the second massacre, and that the Young Turk leaders in Cilicia participated in the organization of the mayhem. The Faik-Mosditchian report was submitted to the Parliament on July 10 and immediately made public, while the report by Babigian remained concealed in the Armenian patriarchate for more than three years.

Several factors confirm that there were pressures in Parliament, probably exerted by the government and the Committee of Union and Progress, to keep the Babigian report from public scrutiny. In a telegram dated July 3, 1909, to the Ottoman Parliament, Yusuf Kemal tried to discredit Babigian and exclude him from the commission by asserting that Babigian had left Cilicia before completing his assignment, a charge that Babigian refuted. Kemal requested that in place of Babigian, Carasso, the Jewish deputy of Salonika, be sent to Adana as quickly as possible.⁶² It seems that the Parliament seriously contemplated replacing Babigian.⁶³

The Evolution of Hilmi's Position

In its issues of July 1 and 19, 1909, the Young Turk daily *Tas-*

⁶² See the report of the 105th meeting of the Parliament in *Azatamart*, July 5, 1909, p. 2.

⁶³ AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 83, folio 159/3, Gabriel-Georges Barre de Lancy, vice consul at Mersin and Tarsus, June 7, 1909. See also Foreign Office Archives, FO 195/2306, Doughty-Wylie to Ambassador Lowther, Constantinople, June 30, 1909.

virî Efkiar published an article by the deputy of Konia, Ebuzzia Tevfik Bey, asserting that Armenians were the principal culprits in the massacres, without hesitating to congratulate the court-martial for its fieldwork.⁶⁴ This first court-martial relied on the reports by the former vali Jevad to condemn the Armenians for their own massacres. In addition, as Turkey faced the increasing pressure of European public opinion, Hakki Bey, an eminent Young Turk, in a statement to *Le Temps* on May 28 defended his party and country: "There is exaggeration. Your press does not always show much benevolence. In fact, we know today that the turmoil in Adana was stirred up in Constantinople. We seized telegrams which prove that the Armenian committee was seeking European intervention."⁶⁵ This statement elicited a sharp reaction from leaders of the Dashnaktsutun, which, though officially allied with the Young Turk party, requested that the CUP Central Committee retract the statement.

After two months of such anti-Armenian declarations, the members of the inquiry commission, including Yusuf Kemal, who left Mersin on July 14, returned to the capital to submit their reports.⁶⁶ Kemal announced during the parliamentary session of July 20 that he was prepared to present his conclusions within a few days.⁶⁷ During the session of July 26, which Babigian attended, the Faik-Mosditchian report identified Adana Vali Jevad, military commander Mustafa Remzi Pasha, Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade, and Ihsan Fikri, as the principal architects of the massacres. However, the court-martial, which consisted mainly of higher-ranking Young Turk officers, exonerated all of these men. Ismail Hakki, the Young Turk deputy from Gumuljina, reproached the government for interfering in the court-martial in Adana, whose president and an eminent member had resigned after orders were issued for the arrest of the main organizers of the massacres. Babigian took the floor to exclaim that "21,000 persons were killed in Adana, and you stand up now to defend

⁶⁴ Reprinted in *Azatamart*, July 3, 1909, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Reprinted in *Azatamart*, July 6, 1909, p. 1. According to the editors of the journal, members of the government agreed in private that all the accusations were false, but they refused to make such a declaration in public.

⁶⁶ AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 83, folio 159/7, Barre de Lancy to Boppe, July 16, 1909.

⁶⁷ Reported in *Azatamart*, July 21, 1909, p. 2.

two individuals." A vociferous encounter followed during which several Turkish deputies contested the number of victims and more generally the fact that the authors of this butchery were not the Armenians themselves. To end the tension, the chamber adopted a resolution that debate on the matter should take place only after the parliamentary commission of inquiry reported its findings completely. Thus ended, on July 26, 1909, the beginning of the debate on the events in Cilicia.⁶⁸

A great number of documents were published in the press in Constantinople in the following days, including two telegrams addressed by the vali Jevad Bey to the mutessarif and sub-prefects of his province as well as to the Ministry of Interior. One telegram, for example, read: "Armenians attacked; the government house is besieged; Armenians are armed and massacred unarmed Turks. Come to our assistance."⁶⁹ In the last week of July, as the tensions escalated, it became clear that debate was impossible. Ambassador Maurice Bompard of France informed Foreign Minister Stéphen Pichon that the official government had to follow the directives of the CUP, which wanted to avoid a damaging discussion in Parliament on the inquiry commission's report.⁷⁰

The debate never took place because deputy Hagop Babigian died on Sunday, August 1, one day before he was scheduled to present his report.⁷¹ According to his brother, on the day of his death, Babigian had settled at his desk to compose the last words of his report. In the morning, he had complained of stomach and chest pains; in the evening, as his condition quickly worsened, he fell into a coma and died. His sudden death resulted in the most varied rumors, although nothing indicated foul play. His death prevented the presentation of the report, the contents of which the public knew only through hearsay and interviews.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Azatamart*, July 27, 1909, p. 2. According to Sherif Pasha, Ismail Hakki became a member of the Young Turk Central Committee. See *Mécheroutiette*, Jan. 1913, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Published in *Azatamart*, no. 29, July 27, 1909, p. 3.

⁷⁰ AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, vol. 83, folio 162, Therapia, Aug. 11, 1909.

⁷¹ *Azatamart*, Aug. 2, 1909, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Aug. 2 and 4, 1909, p. 3 in each. Babigian's funeral on August 4 was attended by a large number of parliamentarians, members of government, and the

During the parliamentary session on August 5, the president of the assembly informed the deputies that Yusuf Kemal had submitted his report. The Armenian deputy Vartkes requested that the report prepared by Babigian be read as well. The assembly decided to hear the conclusions of both reports on Saturday, August 7. When the issue was raised on August 6, however, the president proposed to submit the reports to a special parliamentary committee prior to their reading, and the assembly immediately adopted the proposal.⁷³ It was the last time that the Adana affair was mentioned in the Ottoman Parliament. The two reports were never made public, and their contents were put aside.

It seems that negotiations had taken place to avoid a public showdown regarding a most embarrassing affair. The CUP and government apparently feared the probable reactions. Confidential negotiations between the Young Turk leaders and their uneasy ARF allies resulted in a declaration of cooperation.⁷⁴ It is possible that the Armenian deputies agreed that the reports not be made public and that further parliamentary debate not take place. They thus joined their Turkish colleagues who believed that such a debate would not solve anything and would instead risk poisoning the atmosphere further, as the majority of Parliament preferred to suppress a truth that was far from flattering for the Ottoman Empire. In exchange, the Armenian deputies were probably promised that a public declaration would be made clearing the Armenians of any guilt, with guarantees for their physical security, for assistance to the survivors to recover at least a part of their goods, and for trials to punish the real culprits of the crimes.

A change in official policy could be observed in August 1909:

1) A new prefect, Colonel Ahmed Jemal Bey, was appointed in Adana. The future Minister of the Navy and commander of the Fourth Army during World War I, Jemal was an influential member of the Young Turk Central Committee and known to be

diplomatic corps. Yusuf Kemal and Krikor Zohrab paid homage to his political courage and altruism.

⁷³ Minutes of these meetings were published in the Constantinople press and in Terzian, *Kilikio aghete*, pp. 621-23.

⁷⁴ *Azatamart*, Sept. 5, 1909, p. 1.

energetic and liberal.⁷⁵

2) A budget was allocated to assist the tens of thousands of Armenians who had been rendered homeless.⁷⁶

3) The court-martial established in Cilicia proceeded to arrest the main organizers of the massacres; the common criminals were actually sentenced to death by hanging, but the principal leaders either received light punishment or were set free.

4) Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha published on August 11 an official circular exonerating the Armenians of all accusations.⁷⁷ One sentence sums up the general tone of the text: "There is no doubt that during the days of the old regime where there were the excesses of despotism, some classes of the Armenian community worked for a political objective. But whatever the form in which this work was conducted, it had no other purpose than ridding themselves of the humiliations and of the unbearable misdeeds of a despotic government."

5) On August 12, Minister of Justice Nayil Bey declared publicly that Armenians had no responsibility in the causes of these events.⁷⁸

The Activity of the First Court-Martial

Nothing is more indicative of the political will of the state than the establishment of a judiciary that, while expected to punish the criminals and to restore order and the rule of law, at the same time remains vulnerable to strong political pressure. Concerning the massacres in Cilicia, the activities of the first local court-martial led to abuses, and it was only too obvious, according to foreign diplomats, that the process aimed more at accusing the Armenians than searching for the actual criminals. Hundreds of

⁷⁵ Ibid., Aug. 6, 1909, pp. 1-2, announcing the nomination of Jemal Bey and publishing an interview with him; Ambassador Bompard reported this nomination to Foreign Minister Pichon, Aug. 11, 1909: AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 283, folio 162.

⁷⁶ FO 195/2306, Doughty-Wylie, British Consul at Mersin and Adana, to Ambassador Lowther at Constantinople, May 9, 1909.

⁷⁷ See the French text in AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 283, folios 16422-16423vo; the Armenian text appears in *Azatomart*, Aug. 12, 1909, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Published in *Azatomart*, Aug. 12, 1909, p. 3.

Armenians were arrested, while the instigators of the massacres went unpunished.⁷⁹

The courts also had another particularity: they were established by the chief organizers of the massacres themselves and worked on the basis of the reports provided by the local commissions of inquiry whose members were also implicated. Following European diplomatic protests and the reactions by Armenian leaders in Constantinople, Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha finally informed Parliament on May 24, 1909, of the dispatch of a court-martial of five members, all from the ranks of the Young Turks, to be presided over by Yusuf Kenan Pasha.⁸⁰

The court-martial at first sought to create the impression of equitable justice but in fact maintained the fiction of Armenian responsibility. Evidence of this was the unsolicited report that the court made public before the Faik-Mosditchian report was released. The military magistrates leveled charges against the Armenians of Cilicia, stating that they had demonstrated excessive boldness by exploiting the freedoms that they had just acquired through the restoration of the Ottoman constitution.⁸¹

The officials thus "explained" to a population already ill-disposed toward the Armenians that this behavior was the first sign of a project for Armenian independence and massacres of Muslims. The comments by the French Foreign Minister Pichon to his Ottoman counterpart aptly summed up the methods employed by the court-martial of Adana:

Six Armenians and nine Moslems were just hanged in Adana by order of the court-martial as provocateurs of the massacres. Thus, the court-martial adopted in large measure the version of the authorities of Adana which was intended to implicate the Armenians in responsibility for the catastrophe. We protest against this act of iniquity, by which six representatives of the Armenian population are cruelly punished with the Muslims as instigators of the massacres. We know, moreover, that the punished Muslims are only instruments and that the true criminals remain un-

⁷⁹ FO 195/2306, Doughty-Wylie to Lowther, May 4, 21, 1909; Adossidès, *Arméniens et Jeunes-Turcs*, p. 106, citing the report of the American mission.

⁸⁰ The court also instituted local branches in Tarsus, Erzin, and Marash.

⁸¹ Foreign Office Archives, FO 195/2280, letter of the British Consul at Mersina and Adana, Doughty-Wylie, from Konia, June 15, 1908.

punished. The vali of Adana was not even questioned prior to the court-martial. The director of the Turkish newspaper *Ittidal* of Adana, who personally played an active role in the massacre and publishes dangerously slanderous articles against the Armenians, is not worried and continues his campaign.⁸²

The execution of the six Armenians, while the court-martial cleared all local officials of any responsibility, obliged the government to take some action. Hilmi Pasha ordered the arrest of the following persons and their accomplices incriminated in the inquiry reports:

Jevad Bey, former vali;
Mustafa Remzi Pasha, military commander;
Ihsan Fikri, president of the Young Turk Club of Adana;
Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade, influential notable;
Assaf Bey, mutessarif of Jebel Bereket; and
Kadri Bey, commissioner of police.

More than fifteen days passed, however, before Jevad was arrested on July 27. The new vali, Zihni Pasha, and members of the court-martial had refused to execute the orders, and they had many allies in the Parliament. The grand vizier was left with no alternative but to proceed on July 29 by simultaneously replacing Zihni Pasha with Ahmed Jemal and president of the court-martial Yusuf Kenan with Ismail Fazli Pasha, military commander in Smyrna.⁸³ The same day, the five other persons mentioned above were arrested.

In August, the reformed court-martial finally passed judgment on the principal instigators of the massacres. It made no further mention of Armenian responsibility, yet certain old practices continued. The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople commented in a conference with the grand vizier that, despite Armenian innocence in the matter, several Armenians were being held in prison under terrible conditions, subjected to great brutality. He also complained about the lightness of the penalties imposed on those responsible for the calamity:

⁸² AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 283, folios 121-123, June 16, 1909.

⁸³ Ismail Fazli, a Kurdish landowner, was reputed to be particularly corrupt.

Jevad Bey: sentenced to six years of administrative service with minimal pay;
Mustafa Remzi Pasha: three months' imprisonment (the sentence was not enforced);
Assaf Bey: four years of public service;
Ihsan Fikri: an injunction to stay in Adana;
Ismail Sefa: one month's imprisonment;
Osman Bey: (commander of the garrison of Adana), three months' imprisonment;
Abdul Kader Baghdadi Zade: exile in the Hejaz for two years (later granted amnesty in celebration of the anniversary of restoration of the constitution).⁸⁴

The French vice consul in Mersin and Adana reported to Foreign Minister Pichon on the workings of the court-martial and noted that it was almost impossible for an Armenian to testify. Ihsan Fikri was even allowed to return to Constantinople, after a brief stay in Cairo, by his Young Turk colleagues supposedly to present a report. Meanwhile, Jemal Bey ordered some of the lower officials hanged, but he did not punish those in the higher echelons of government, such as Ihsan Fikri, who were the most responsible for the crimes. The limits of this justice were made clear during an interview that the Armenian patriarch had with the president of the court-martial, General Ismail Fazli Pasha, on September 4, 1909. Fazli had condemned forty Turks and three Armenians to death, but to a question by the patriarch, the Turkish general retorted: "Indeed, it is totally agreed that the Armenians were innocent; however, there are Armenians who committed acts that the Turks themselves will not allow."⁸⁵

Beyond the good intentions announced by Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha in August, the military courts persisted in perceiving the Armenians as rebellious, without allowing them to prove the contrary. An American witness noted:

Many people are kept in prison as a result of false accusations. It seems that each could be arrested and imprisoned on a word

⁸⁴ AMAE, Correspondance politique, Turquie, n.s., vol. 283, folios 16421, 16424, 16433, dispatches to Mersin, Sept. 11 and 21, 1909.

⁸⁵ *Azatamart*, Sept. 6, 1909, p. 3.

pronounced by a Muslim. I know of no case where the testimony of an Armenian called to testify was accepted.⁸⁶

It may be concluded that the Ottoman government and the Young Turk members of the court-martial were more concerned about saving appearances than rendering justice.

⁸⁶ Adossidès, *Arméniens et Jeunes-Turcs*, pp. 119-20.



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